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From Policy to Praxis: Cultural Diversity, Human Rights and the Challenges of International Standard Setting

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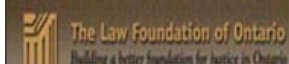UNIVERSITY
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Introduction

Since its founding in 1945, the United Nations and its specialized agencies have developed and adopted normative or standard-setting instruments to enable Member States to incorporate and implement universally accepted standards in their individual domestic policies and laws.

These standard-setting instruments are usually developed and drafted by international committees of specialists in the discipline concerned following extensive consultation with both governments and non-governmental organizations. They are then reviewed, debated and adopted by all the Member States of the organization. In the case of conventions, they do not enter into force until a prescribed number of countries have ratified them; this is to ensure that there is a critical mass to give effect its intent and provisions. UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization – has developed over 80 standard-setting instruments, many of which develop, protect, and foster human rights.

UNESCO - An Overview

In November 1942, a Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) from 18 governments began a series of meetings in London, England, that continued until December 1945. Coincident with these meetings, in October 1945, the United Nations Charter was adopted in San Francisco and provided for the establishment of a United Nations agency responsible for education, science and culture. The CAME Ministers strongly supported this initiative and proposed that a United Nations Conference be convened to establish such an organization. This Conference also took place in London and, on November 16, 1945, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded to promote international cooperation, peace and security through education, science and culture.[1] Thirty-seven countries signed its Constitution, although it did not come into force until it was ratified by the 20th Member State in November 1946.[2] Canada was one of the 20 charter members of UNESCO.

UNESCO is a "specialized agency" within the UN system which means that it is responsible for specific activities within the mandate of the United Nations, has its own

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[1] For further information about the founding and history of UNESCO see Michel Conil Lacoste, *The Story of a Grand Design: UNESCO, 1946-1993*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1994, and Fernando Valderrama, *A History of UNESCO*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1995.

[2] The first 20 states to ratify the Constitution were the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Union of South Africa, Australia, India, Mexico, France, Dominican Republic, Turkey, Egypt, Norway, Canada, China, Denmark, United States of America, Czechoslovakia, Brazil, Lebanon, and Greece.

Constitution, its own programme of work, and its own budget.[3] Membership and structure of specialized agencies are separate from the UN which means that membership in the United Nations does not confer membership in a specialized agency and *vice versa*. In fact, UNESCO currently has 193 Member States - one more than the United Nations itself (Cook Islands are a member of UNESCO and not of the UN) - and seven Associate Member States. With a total membership of 200 Member States, UNESCO is currently the largest of the UN organizations. UNESCO's mission is to contribute to peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information.[4] To fulfill this mandate, UNESCO performs five principal functions:

- o *laboratory of ideas* - by anticipating and defining emerging problems and identifying appropriate strategies and policies to address them;

- o *standard-setting* - through the preparation and adoption of international conventions, declarations and recommendations that articulate ethical, normative and intellectual issues;

- o *clearing house* - by gathering, transferring, disseminating and sharing information, knowledge and best practices;

- o *capacity building* - through international cooperation and building human and institutional capacities; and,

- o *catalyst for international cooperation* - as a technical, multidisciplinary agency, UNESCO assumes a catalytic role for development cooperation and seeks to ensure that the objectives, principles and priorities it promotes are part of other multilateral and bilateral programme activities.[5]

In practice, these functions take the form of international conventions, recommendations and declarations; conferences and specialized meetings; prospective studies and research; publications (books, periodicals, reports and web postings); technical and advisory services including staff missions; access to, and utilization of, the knowledge of international experts; training courses, seminars and workshops; and (decreasingly) small financial contributions.

Standard-Setting

Of UNESCO's five functions, it is standard-setting that is of principal interest here. Also known as normative action, this involves the establishment of universal standards for behaviour developed at the international level that are to be applied and implemented at the national level.

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[3] Article 57 of the UN Charter provides for "various specialized agencies, established by inter governmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields, shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations."
[4] See the web site of UNESCO especially the section "Introducing UNESCO: what we are." www.unesco.org
[5] *UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy, 2001 - 2007*, (31 C/4) paragraph 30, page 6, and *UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy, 2008 - 2013*, (34 C/4), paragraph 4, page 7.

Standard-setting represents one of the main constitutional functions of UNESCO and an important tool for realizing the goals for which the Organization was created. In addition to conventions and recommendations, the declarations adopted by the General Conference[6] promulgate principles and norms intended to inspire the action of Member States in specific fields of activity.[6]

International standards takes three forms: ***declarations***, that are non-binding but establish moral commitments that link Member States based on good faith and agreement about how to address a specific issue; ***recommendations***, that are also non-binding, but reflect consensual agreement to act in a specific direction through the adoption of agreed actions; and ***conventions***, that are binding upon States party to the convention, and are expressions of the joint will of the parties to achieve specific objectives. As such, a convention is synonymous with a treaty and establishes legal, binding commitments on the States party to it. All standard-setting instruments at UNESCO are the result of lengthy consultations and negotiations among all Member States and all must be adopted by the General Conference before their implementation.[7]

Human Rights and UNESCO

Human rights are at the very essence of UNESCO's mandate. Article 1 of the Constitution of UNESCO (1945) states:

> *The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law **and for the human rights** and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.* (emphasis added)

As such, human rights are inherent in all its policies, its program activities, and its approach to standard-setting. Shortly after its founding, UNESCO was involved in the elaboration of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and participated in drafting the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both adopted in 1966. Human rights have remained predominant in international standards adopted since 2001.[8]

In 2003, in response to the Reform Programme of the United Nations Secretary-General[9], and the United Nations Millennium Declaration[10] that required that the entire United Nations system enhance its human rights activities, UNESCO prepared a comprehensive strategy on human rights. The strategy sought to integrate a rights-based approach into all of UNESCO's

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[6] For more on UNESCO standard-setting, see the UNESCO website at
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=23772&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
[7] The General Conference is one of the "three organs" of UNESCO and is its supreme-decision body where all Member States participate on the basis of "one country, one vote." It meets every two years to adopt the biennial programme and budget, and to determine future policy orientations for the Organization.
[8] Between 2001 and 2005, the General Conference adopted four standard-setting instruments related to human rights: *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, 2001; the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*, 2003: *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003: and, *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, 2005.
[9] United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/51/950, 14 July 1997.
[10] United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/55/2, 18 September 2000, especially paragraphs 24 and 25.

programmes through encouraging research and disseminating knowledge on human rights, promoting human rights education as an integral part of the right to education, and developing and implementing human rights standards. The overall goal of the strategy was to increase UNESCO's existing contribution to the advancement of human rights as part of a global culture that would ultimately lead to "globalization with a human face." [11]

Implicit in this approach are the concepts of "duty-bearers" and "rights-holders." Duty-bearers are usually States and as such they must recognize and respect human rights, while at the same time accepting that this imposes duties and obligations on them. As a party to a human rights agreement, for example, a State – as a duty-bearer – assumes the responsibility to respect, protect and fulfill those rights. Equally important are the rights-holders or the recipients and beneficiaries of the rights that flow from the international agreement. Their role is not that of passive recipient however; instead they must actively claim their rights and recognize that they themselves are key actors in their own development.[12]

Standard-setting and Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity has also been central to the work of UNESCO since its founding, and again this concept is contained in its founding document. By virtue of Article 3 of its Constitution, UNESCO's mandate includes responsibility for "preserving the fruitful diversity of cultures."[13] The importance of cultural diversity achieved renewed prominence during the period of rapid decolonization in the 1960s, and the realization that political emancipation also resulted in an increased awareness among people of their unique ways of life. As early as 1966, the UNESCO General Conference adopted a declaration that included the statement that "each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved."[14]

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's a series of international meetings were held that began the process whereby culture was brought onto the policy agenda for most countries. This led to the proclamation of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997), the publication of *Our Creative Diversity* (the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development), and the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development in Stockholm in April 1998. All of these activities reinforced the principle that cultural products are unique and do not conform to the general economic rules that apply to the markets for other goods and services. These unique characteristics often derive from the environment where they are produced and as a "unique product" they obtain strength from this diversity. In the words of the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development**, *Our Creative Diversity*, "For groups and societies, culture is energy, inspiration and empowerment, as well as the knowledge and

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[11] Draft UNESCO Strategy on Human Rights, document 32 C/57, 22 September 2003, paragraphs 10 – 12, pages 2-3. Adopted without vote by the 32nd General Conference of UNESCO, October 2003.
[12] For an interesting discussion of the practical implications of implementing a human rights-based strategy and the role of duty bearers and rights-holders see *Undertaking a Human Rights-Based Approach: A Guide to Basic Programming*, Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2008.
[13] Article 3 of the Constitution of UNESCO.
[14] Article 1 of the *Declaration of Principles of International Cooperation*, adopted by the 14th General Conference of UNESCO, 4 November 1966 . The complete text of Article 1 is as follows:
"1. Each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved.
 2. Every people has the right and the duty to develop its culture.
 3. In their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences they exert on one
 another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind."

acknowledgment of diversity, just as in the tasks of building peace and consolidating democratic values."[15]

The UNESCO General Conference in 2001 marked the beginning of five years of active development and adoption of standard-setting instruments. The first was the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* that was unanimously adopted by the 188 Member States of UNESCO on November 2, 2001. The timing of the adoption of this Declaration, less than two months after the fateful events of September 11, is significant and it is questionable if some of its provisions would have been retained under different circumstances.[16] The Declaration sees cultural diversity as something organic and begins with the words "cultural diversity is as important to humankind as biodiversity is to nature." It also echoes the language of the UNESCO Constitution when it states that cultural diversity implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly those of minorities and indigenous peoples.[17] As a declaration, the document must be read as a statement of principles, but it is noteworthy that it also includes an action plan for its implementation. The unanimous adoption of the Declaration also pointed to the possibility of a more ambitious approach to cultural diversity in the future in the form of an international convention.

While UNESCO's Culture Sector was actively working on a convention on cultural diversity between 2003 and 2005, the Social and Human Sciences Sector and in turn the International Bioethics Committee received a mandate to draft an international instrument on bioethics that became the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights*.[18] This Declaration built on the work UNESCO had done since 1995 to develop basic, international principles in bioethics through the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* (1997), and the *International Declaration on Human Genetic Data* (2003).

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[15] Through the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development, culture has come to be viewed as "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize society or a social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs." See Javier Pérez de Cuéllar*, Our Creative Diversity*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing/Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1995, page 10.

Canada played a leading role in the follow-up to the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998) when the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Sheila Copps, moved quickly to implement the Action Plan by convening an international meeting of culture ministers in Ottawa in June of that same year. This led to the establishment of the International Network on Cultural Policy (INCP) as a forum where culture ministers can exchange views on emerging cultural issues and develop strategies to promote cultural diversity.

[16] The General Conference in 2001 was the first ministerial-level meeting held after September 11. Participants at the meeting felt a strong need to reaffirm the importance of intercultural dialogue in response to the attacks on the World Trade Centre. In the introduction to the UNESCO publication on the Universal Declaration, the Director-General stated that the adoption of the Declaration "was an opportunity for States to reaffirm their conviction that intercultural dialogue is the best guarantee of peace and to reject outright the theory of the inevitable clash of cultures and civilization."

[17] Article 4 – Human rights as guarantees of cultural diversity – states: "The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope."

[18] The resolution "invites the Organization to examine the possibility of developing …a universal instrument on bioethics." Given the statutory time periods for consultation of Member States about draft normative instruments, this gave the Committee 12 months to prepare the text. See Resolution 24 adopted by the General Conference at its 32nd Session, in *Records of the General Conference, 32nd Session, 29 September to 17 October 2003, Volume 1, Resolutions*, pp. 46-47.

Adopted in 2005, the Declaration addresses ethical issues raised by medicine, life sciences and associated technologies as applied to human beings, and bases its principles in respect for human dignity and human rights. It includes specific references to cultural diversity, which it views as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, but also sounds a cautionary note: cultural diversity must not be invoked as a reason to infringe on human dignity, human rights, or fundamental freedoms.

Perhaps UNESCO's best known legal instrument with respect to cultural diversity, however, is a document that is fundamentally not about cultural diversity: the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005). Indeed, at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions held in December 2010, some Committee members felt compelled to remind others that the Convention concerns the diversity of cultural expressions, not cultural diversity.

This Convention, which has been ratified by 117 of UNESCO's 193 Member States, recognizes the distinctive nature of cultural goods, services and activities as conveyors of identity and values, and that while they have important economic value they are not mere commodities or consumer goods that can only be seen as objects of trade. The Convention also acknowledges that culture takes diverse forms across time and space and that this diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities and cultural expressions of peoples and societies. Article 2 clearly articulates the relationship between the provisions of the Convention and human rights:

> Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions, are guaranteed. No one may invoke the provisions of this Convention in order to infringe human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or guaranteed by international law, or to limit the scope thereof.

Cultural Diversity vs. Multiculturalism

It is important to make the distinction between cultural diversity and multiculturalism, as confusion has sometimes arisen between the two concepts. Cultural diversity as defined in various UNESCO standard-setting instruments can perhaps best be summarized as the "ways in which the cultures of groups find expression."[19] Multiculturalism, in contrast, is a government policy that celebrates the diverse heritage of its citizens within the broader context of the – often – receiving State through a series of laws that recognize and protect their rights to both be citizens and to not have to assimilate into the dominant culture. Its policy objective is to create an environment where all citizens can retain their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and heritage, yet also have a sense of belonging in their adopted country.[20] Cultural diversity and

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[19] See article 4 of the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* for definitions of cultural diversity, cultural content, cultural expressions, cultural activities, goods and services, cultural industries, and cultural policies and measure, available at http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/2005-convention/the-convention/convention-text/
[20] See the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.)).

multiculturalism are not, therefore, synonymous, although there is inevitable interplay between them.

Recent statements from several Heads of States in Europe have called into question the future of their multicultural policies, and have underscored the tensions that these well-meaning policies have engendered. The multicultural policies of the United Kingdom, France and Germany have all been called "failures" by their governments because immigrants have not adopted the "common culture" of the country. British Prime Minister David Cameron has gone so far as to state publicly that multiculturalism is "the root cause of radicalization which can lead to terrorism"[21], France has recently banned some forms of Muslim apparel and in 2010 offered every adult Roma 300 Euros to leave the country[22], and German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that the concept of multiculturalism, where people of different backgrounds live in harmony together, "has utterly failed in Germany." [23]

Challenges to Human Rights and Cultural Diversity

While UNESCO spent the first half of this decade adopting standard-setting instruments that embraced cultural diversity, some of the subsequent interpretations of the provisions of these instruments have suggested that the altruism of their authors and the enthusiasm at the time of their adoption has been inconsistently applied in their implementation.

In 2007, for example, the Non-Aligned Movement[24] convened a Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The Final Report of the meeting displays a clear anti-Western bias, and suggests that human rights must be reconsidered so that "certain countries can not (*sic*) define human rights in their own malicious ways shaped by their political and economic objectives." It also condemns the "occupying power" in Palestine and the Golan Heights, and warns of the danger of "further division among

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[21] Speech of Prime Minister David Cameron to the Munich Security Conference, 5 February 2011. See http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-my-war-on-multiculturalism-2205074.html

[22] On 13 July 2011, the National Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of banning long veils in public. This was supported by the French Senate on 14 September 2010 by a vote of 246 – 1, with abstentions. The bill makes it illegal to wear garments such as the niqab or burka, which incorporate a full-face veil, anywhere in public, and includes fines of 150 Euros for women who break the law.

The majority of Roma emigrated from Romania or Bulgaria and lived in "illegal camps" in France. The incentives for them to leave France were introduced after violent conflicts occurred between Roma and French police in a small town in the Loire Valley. It is reported that the previous year the French government "repatriated" 10,000 Roma. These actions brought criticism from both the United Nation's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the European Union.
See http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11020429

[23] Speech of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to youth members of the Christian Democratic Union Party, Potsdam, Germany, 17 October 2010. See http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/17/angela-merkel-german-multiculturalism-failed

[24] The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) consists of approximately 118 developing countries and seeks to represent the political, economic and cultural interests of the developing world. A creation of the Cold War, a meeting in 1961 established criteria for NAM membership that included the provision that members could not be involved in alliances or defense pacts with the world's main military powers. Much of the NAM's work takes place at the United Nations in New York and through the UN system generally.

cultures and religions caused by ill intentions which will have negative impacts on human rights values."[25] In this context, cultural diversity is clearly being invoked to serve political ends.

Cultural diversity has also been used to justify historic practices that are, in themselves, violations of human rights. The most flagrant example of this is female genital mutilation, sometimes euphemistically referred to as female circumcision. Proponents of this practice have invoked cultural diversity to legitimize their "right" to continue this practice whether the subject to the practice consents or not. Other forms of gender-based violence, including spousal abuse, "honour killings", and forced marriage, have also invoked cultural diversity as the justification for this behavior.

Cultural relativism, or the assertion that human values, far from being universal, vary according to different cultural perspectives, has equally been used in the context of cultural diversity. Taken to its ultimate conclusion, this doctrine would mean that if cultural tradition alone governs State compliance with international standards, then widespread disregard, abuse, and violation of human rights would be given legitimacy. Said differently, if perceived as culturally relevant, the promotion and protection of human rights would be subject to individual State discretion and interpretation, rather than any universal legal imperative.[26]

Challenges to Implementing International Standards

While international standards seek to establish universal norms for behavior, whether they be moral, indicative, or legal, their application and implementation can be anything but standardized or universal. The following are some of the challenges to their implementation:

> **Wavering commitments:** Ratification of international instruments can sometimes be a temporal exercise. The government of the day may support the convention, declaration, or recommendation, while its successors may have little or no interest in the inherent responsibilities that come with acceptance or ratification. Unclear policy approaches, lack of an overall coordinated approach, competition between and among government departments, can all pose challenges to implementing the State's assumed responsibilities.

> **Resource implications:** Implementation of international commitments can be more expensive, both in terms of human and financial resources, than originally anticipated. If these resources are not available or cannot be found, the international instrument is implemented unevenly or not at all.

> **Reporting:** Most Conventions require that signatories report annually or biannually on their implementation activities. Unfortunately, this requirement is often ignored, resulting in challenges for documenting progress toward, and challenges to, achieving the desired objectives at both the national and

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[25] See the *Final Report of the Rapporteur-General of the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, Tehran, 3-4 September 2007* on the web site of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations.

[26] Cultural relativism has its roots in anthropology and the challenges faced by researchers to remain neutral and not impose their cultural values when observing and documenting the practices of other societies. More recently, it has been used to argue against the concept of universality.

international level. This absence of documented practical experience can in turn lead to the perception that the Convention is outdated, requires revision, or is a "failure."

Donor fatigue: While it is obviously beyond the control of a country receiving foreign aid, donor fatigue and the failure to honour aid commitments can undermine the ability of the receiving State to make long-term commitments to implement international agreement. If the anticipated resources do not become available, domestic challenges and concerns will inevitably override international obligations.

State fragility: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines fragile states as countries where the government lacks the will and/or the capacity to engage productively with its citizens due to weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crises, violence, or a legacy of civil unrest. When a State is not able to function effectively at the national level, the ability to meet international commitments is inevitably lost as well.[27]

Emerging rights: The emergence or creation of new rights, either through new standard-setting instruments or through general agreement, can lead to competition with established rights for the scarce resources required to implement or honour them. Emerging rights are also sometimes opposed by States if they pose challenges to existing practices, as national interests will often supersede the expansion of human rights. The long-term effect is that new rights are not endorsed and new conventions are not ratified.

Confusion about the application: It is not uncommon for States Party to a Convention to discover that they did not fully understand all of the implications of ratification, or that some articles do not mean what they thought they did. This can lead to protracted debate among signatory countries when developing operational guidelines for a Convention, and to very different interpretations of the meaning and intent of specific articles and provisions when they are being implemented.

State security: There have recently been cases where governments have altered or suspended human rights enshrined in international agreements in the name of national security as they deal with internal threats both real and imagined.[28] In many cases, the majority of citizens of the country have accepted this. The

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[27] According to the OECD, one sixth of the world's population of 6.5 billion, half of all the world's infant deaths, and one third of the world's people living in extreme poverty (people living on less than $1 US per day) live in fragile states. The majority of these states are in Africa.

[28] See, for example, the United Kingdom's *Civil Contingencies Act*, 2004, that authorizes the Prime Minister or a Minister of the Crown to dismantle the Rule of Law on the suspicion that an emergency is about the take place. See Clive Walker and James Broderick, *The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004: Risk, Resilience and the Law in the United Kingdom*: Oxford University Press, 2006

domestic implications for human rights resulting from the "war on terrorism" are just one example where the immediacy of the situation is used as an argument to override long-term human rights considerations. If rights are "universal and inalienable" however, they cannot be voluntarily surrendered or taken away.

Conclusion

Standard-setting within the United Nations system has many advantages, including establishing the "rules of the game" around often contentious questions through a process of consultation, negotiation and collective decision-making. It also has the added advantage of providing a multilateral forum for debating issues that sometimes cannot be addressed at the national level for political, social, or religious reasons.

Many standard-setting instruments include a provision for public information to both enhance awareness about the issue they address and the fact that the international community has agreed to cooperate to take action to remedy it. Public information can include in-country training, enhanced cooperation with other UN organizations, and publicity campaigns that target both specific constituencies and the public-at-large. This is an area that has often been insufficiently addressed and is worthy of more attention to ensure that States Party work to achieve the universality of international standards.

The propensity by some Member States and UN organizations to want to prepare a plethora of new standard-setting instruments can also be counter-productive in the same way as the creation of emerging rights: resources and the capacity to implement existing instruments are limited and the addition of new ones can have the unintended effect of diluting the impact of those that already exist. A stronger concentration and focus on <u>fully</u> implementing the provisions of existing declarations, recommendations and conventions, and amending them as necessary to address evolving circumstances, will prove to be more effective in the long-term than creating new instruments.